

December 5, 1951

Dr. C. B. van Niel
Hopkins Marine Station
Pacific Grove, California

Dear Kees:

Except for the summer of 1950, Esther and I have spent the last few years here working winter and summer. By experience, I know that come next summer we are going to be desperate not only for relief from the vicious climate here, but also for a change of scene. We are not looking for a vacation, but a place where we can work for a while in a different environment— perhaps on a different kind of problem.

As you have guessed by this time, I am writing to ask you about the feasibility of spending some time at the Hopkins Marine Station this summer. I am on a calendar year appointment here, and have not yet worked out how long I can take leave without serious loss of income, but some arrangement with the authorities here should be possible, most likely for June and July which can be counted as a month's vacation leave in each of two fiscal years. Before we can work this out, however, I wanted your reaction to the proposal. I know how thoroughly preoccupied you will be with your course, and much as I would enjoy being an observer, I would not wish to be even a slight distraction to you on it. On the other hand, if you expect to be completely tied up for all of the time mentioned, the most important incentive for coming out would be missing.

Please do not hesitate to point out the obstacles to this plan, but I do hope they will not be insuperable.

By the way— at Roger's instigation, I tried to verify the Smith-Oginsky-Umbreit report that streptomycin-resistant mutants of *E. coli* have lost the capacity to use oxygen for (improved) growth. I could find no difference in the improvement of growth by aeration in any S^r mutants we had, nor in the cultures provided by Oginsky. Do you happen to know of any confirmation of this work? Lately, I have also been working a bit with *Streptomyces griseus*, whose 2-3 day culture cycle is very relaxing by contrast with our other bacteria. With the help of replica plating, auxotroph mutants were obtained with no difficulty. So far, however, tests for recombination or formation of prototrophic heterokaryons have been inconclusive. There is a lot of more work to be done with different types, however, and in particular I've a lot to learn about the actinomycetes generally.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg